



**Strengthening Basic Education
EQUIP2, El Salvador
Quarterly Report No. 1
December 2005-March 2006**



1- Quarterly Report

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List of Acronyms

| | |
|----------|--|
| AED | Academy for Educational Development |
| COP | Chief of Party |
| CTO | Cognizant Technical Officer |
| EQUIP2 | Education Quality Improvement Program 2 |
| FEPADE | Private Sector Foundation for Educational Development |
| M & E | Monitoring and Evaluation |
| MINED | Ministry of Education |
| NEA | National Education Account |
| NGO | Nongovernmental Organization |
| PEA | Proyecto Educativo Anual |
| PEI | Proyecto Educativo Institucional |
| PMC | Presidential Monitoring Committee |
| PMP | Performance Monitoring Plan |
| RTI | Research Triangle Institute |
| SRC | CERCA's School Report Card |
| TBN | To Be Nominated |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development El Salvador |
| UCA | Universidad Centroamericana |
| UTEC | Universidad Tecnológica |
| FLACSO | Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales |
| DIGESTYC | Dirección General de Estadística y Censos |
| INSAFORP | Instituto Salvadoreño de Formación Profesional |
| FUNDE | Fundación Nacional para el Desarrollo |
| ANEP | Asociación Nacional de la Empresa Privada |
| FUNDES | Fundación desarrollo de Pequeñas y Medianas Empresas |
| G10 | Teacher trainers group of 10 |
| G50 | Teacher trainers group of 50 |
| CETT | Centers of Excellence for Teacher Training |

Contents

Executive Summary

| | |
|--|---|
| Technical activities during reporting period | 4 |
| Lessons learned..... | 8 |
| Challenges encountered and proposed solutions | 8 |
| Success stories..... | 9 |
| Management visits and geographic information system..... | 9 |
| International technical assistance..... | 9 |

EQUIP2

EQUIP 2 STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN EL SALVADOR

Executive Summary

The USAID/El Salvador EQUIP2 Strengthening Basic Education Program in El Salvador is an integrated set of activities that support the short and long term efforts and priorities of the 2021 National Education Plan of the Ministry of Education. The project includes activities to increase and improve social investment and transparency in the education sector, as well as to increase and improve the opportunities in basic education. Although all the program activities aim to achieve an impact at the national level, the intervention is being implemented in 500 schools of five departments, with an estimated population of 500 directors, 3,000 teachers and 100,000 students, during a period of four years ending in June 2009.

EQUIP2 proposed two phases of project development. Phase I is a brief period for planning and project design with USAID, MINED, and the other partners (FEPADE y SAVE THE CHILDREN). Phase II consists of project implementation. This quarterly report, which covers December 2005 to March 2006, reviews the accomplishments of Phase I and the beginning of program implementation in Phase II.

This first quarter has been an intense period of planning, redesigning of the project, and establishing the managerial and administrative capacity for the project. Results for this quarter include: agreement between MINED, USAID and the three implementers on an integrated workplan, the initiation of National Education Accounts activity and the materials for Component 2, and the establishment of the local team and permanent office.

This report summarizes the principle activities and next step by component and reviews the challenges and lessons learned during this quarter.

Summary of Principle Activities

1. Phase I

Implementation of Integrated Plan Workshop

EQUIP2 took a leadership role to plan and carry out the development of an Integrated Work Plan. EQUIP2 designed and supported the logistics for two workshops to create the integrated plan for the Strengthening Basic Education in Language USAID-MINED program. The purpose of the Integrated Plan was to agree on the primary activities, roles, responsibilities and timelines for each of the implementers, USAID and MINED. The first workshop for implementers and USAID took place from January 17-19. The second, from January 24-26 was held with key players from the various departments of MINED, USAID and the three implementers. EQUIP2 contracted Alan Hurwitz, an expert facilitator with extensive experience in strategic planning and prior experience with USAID in El Salvador. Following the workshop, the key players held follow-up meetings to revise and submit the Integrated Plan to MINED for approval in late February.

Formal Launching of the Program

The USAID Strengthening Basic Education Program Program was officially launched on January 23. EQUIP2 provided logistical support for the launch.

Identification of the EQUIP2 Team, Establishment and Administrative Procedures

During Phase I, EQUIP2 established a temporary office and hired three of five key personnel. The EQUIP2 Chief of Party, Antonieta Harwood, moved to El Salvador and initiated her duties immediately. EQUIP2/AED began the process for updating its registration, moving furniture, buying equipment and other necessary processes for establishing the permanent office.

Local Team

Chief of Party . Antonieta Harwood
Education Specialist . Celia Moran
M&E and PEI Specialist . Mario Rivas
Finance and Administration Specialist . Gustavo Carcamo
Competency Specialist (18 months) - TBN
In-country Education Finance Specialist - TBN
Economists (2 for one year) . TBN
Finance and Administration Assistant . TBN
Facilitators (8) . TBN
Drivers (2) - TBN
Janitor . TBN

2. Principle Phase II Technical Activities

Implementation Plan for 2006

EQUIP2 presented its Implementation Plan for 2006. One of the results of the Integrated Planning workshops was that some of EQUIP2's activities and responsibilities changed which has required some redesigning of the strategy and a change in the profile and composition of key personnel and consultants.

National Education Accounts

The National Education Accounts activity was initiated. Working jointly with MINED, EQUIP2 developed a detailed work plan for the development of National Education Accounts. To prepare this plan, EQUIP2 carried out more than 20 meetings with representatives from groups outside of the MINED including UCA, Presidential Monitoring Commission, UTEC, Banco Central, the Ministry of Housing, FLACSO DIGESTYC, INSAFORP, FUNDE, Futurekids, ANEP, FUNDES, FEPADE, among others. EQUIP2 and MINED created a document that outlines the conceptual framework of the National Education Accounts, which was shared with the Presidential Monitoring Commission.

Cost-Benefit Studies

Meetings and interviews with MINED/*Comprendo* were carried out in order to identify the information available on the design and implementation of *Comprendo* necessary for initiating the study. Discussions were also held about including other projects focused on reading and writing as part of the study.

Elaboration of Study Programs and design of the comprehensive strategy

During the Integrated Planning Workshop, it was decided that EQUIP2 would have the lead responsibility for developing the instructional materials (textbooks, teacher's guides and student workbooks), an activity that was not originally within the EQUIP2 scope of work. To begin the preparation of the materials, EQUIP2 brought an expert in language competencies to review the language competencies that had been developed, review the materials currently being used for teaching language and to carry out meetings with key personnel from MINED on its plans for the materials development. EQUIP2 also began the preparation of the Study Programs, beginning with the first grade, and began the development of the comprehensive strategy for the elaboration of materials and teachers training modules.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

EQUIP2 developed the monitoring and evaluation strategy. In February, an expert in Monitoring and Evaluation came to train local staff and carry out meetings with USAID, MINED, and other partners to review available sources of information and to define the type of data that would be needed for the performance monitoring system. As a result of this work, EQUIP2 presented the PMP to USAID.

The following table provides detailed information on the status of each component:

EQUIP2**STRENGTHENING BASIC EDUCATION PROGRAM IN EL SALVADOR****Quarterly Report December – March 2006****Technical activities during reporting period**

| GOALS | QUARTERLY RESULTS | COMMENTS/ NEXT STEPS |
|--|--|--|
| Component 1. To increase investment in the social sector and its transparency | | |
| A.1. Cost-effectiveness studies of selected programs | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Together with the MINED it was agreed to carry out a study on the <i>Comprendo</i> Program.- Met with key members of MINED staff to assess current data collection and availability of program documents | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Review existing documentation and availability of data; design questions for inclusion in school survey- Review information of other language interventions like CETT. |
| A.2. Methodology and institutionalization of the NEA | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Met with MINED staff and key actors in the sector to discuss plans for NEA- Drafted agreement letters for obtaining databases- Identified candidate for Economist/NEA Team Leader.- Completed concept note on NEA | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Finalize list of participants in workshop and Consultative Group;- Plan and carry out workshop- Review databases and produce initial database mapping reports based on prior year data |
| A.3. Integration of the MINED information system | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Identified MINED databases and their organization- Key people in the MINED and in some departments were interviewed. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Work with MINED staff to develop TOR and analytical report for information system integration |

| GOALS | QUARTERLY RESULTS | COMMENTS/ NEXT STEPS |
|---|--|--|
| A.4. Support for the Presidential Monitoring Commission | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Held two meetings with Sandra de Barraza, Coordinator of the Commission. - Identified the topic for the first Commission study: <i>Education and Democratic Coexistence: Dialogue, Respect, Organization, and Group Work.</i> - Defined areas of coordination with the Commission on the NEA, including the incorporation of information from studies that FUSADES carried out under the leadership of the Commission. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Continue coordinating with the Commission for the NEA activities. - Initiate study on <i>Education and Democratic Coexistence: Dialogue, Respect, Organization, and Group Work.</i> |
| B. Component 2. To improve the opportunities in Basic Education | | |
| B.1.National Strategy of Language based on Competencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Initiated design of the strategy for language competencias and continuous assessment and creation of the technical team for this activity - Began elaborating Study Programs for first through sixth grades. -The revision process of the draft of the first grade textbook was initiated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Complete the formation of the technical team that will develop the Study Programs, the elaboration and validation of materials, and the two teacher training modules. -Hold a technical planning session with the members of the technical team. -Complete the study programs and deliver to the MINED. -Send the education specialist to Nicaragua to learn about Nicaragua's experience in introducing competency-based curriculum and to learn about the Active Schools |
| B.2, 3 and 4. Training of teacher trainers; development of modules for the teacher training; and development of a plan for applied investigation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - These activities have been programmed for the end of 2006 and beginning of 2007. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Design the strategy for developing teacher training modules. -Design the strategy for the training of G10 and G50. jointly with FEPADE -Design the strategy for follow-up support to G-50 on competencias and continuous assessment. |

| GOALS | QUARTERLY RESULTS | COMMENTS/ NEXT STEPS |
|--|---|---|
| C. Objective C: Strengthening of community participation in improving the quality of education in 500 schools | | |
| C.1. Design the strategy for strengthening the PEI in 500 schools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Sent PEI/M&E Specialist to Colombia to learn about their experiences in implementing the PEI. -Discussed the strategy for this activity with the MINED. -The scope of the PEI diagnostic has been defined. | -Carry out the diagnostic. |
| C.2. Build awareness among different actors about the PEI strategy | | -Develop informational materials to support the PEI strategy. |
| C.3. Train the facilitators that will work in the elaboration of PEI | - Began interviewing facilitators. | -Train facilitators in the PEI strategy. |
| C.4. Build local capacity with the monitoring teams of the MINED | -Held meetings with the <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> | -Hold meetings with departmental directors, coordinators, and monitoring teams |
| C.5. Build local capacity among the community members for strengthening the PEI | | -Initiate training in 80 schools. |
| C.6. Strengthen the school management tools | - Reviewed management instruments used in the elaboration of PEI. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Incorporate results of the diagnostic to recommend changes in management instruments. -Continue coordination with the MINED. |
| D. Objective D: To improve the civic competencies in 500 schools | | |
| D.1. To support meetings with the MINED | - Held meetings with MINED and the Presidential Monitoring Commission on civic competencies. | - Link the Presidential Monitoring Commission on the study on Education and Democratic Coexistence with the theme of civic competencies. |
| D.2 Carry out meetings with other NGOs to review best practices | | - Assess practices in other countries to link civic competencies within language instruction to determine how to incorporate civic competencies into the materials for language competencies. |
| D.3. Identify alliances | | - Meet with potential partners and carry out follow-up meetings. |

| GOALS | QUARTERLY RESULTS | COMMENTS/ NEXT STEPS |
|--|---|--|
| E. Monitoring and Evaluation | | |
| E.1 and 2. Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan and its implementation plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Developed Performance Monitoring Plan and M&E strategy. - Supported the development of an integrated PMP for all the implementers. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Support the development of an integrated M&E plan for the three projects. - Support USAID in the analysis and collection of the indicators. - Train local M & E team will be trained. |
| E.3.Carry out workshops with the MINED monitoring team | -Held technical assistance meetings with the <i>Equipos de Seguimiento</i> . | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide recommendations for the unified monitoring strategy -Hold meetings with departmental directors, coordinators and monitoring teams. |
| E.4. Collect information | | - Develop instruments and time of collection. |
| F. Administrative Management | | |
| F.1 Establish the office and the procedures | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The COP received a 4-day training with USAID CTOs. - Began developing an administrative manual. - Initiated steps for updating the registration. - Established permanent office | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finalize the administration manual for the El Salvador office. -Complete registration process. - Complete procurement of office equipment and vehicle. |
| F.2 To contract local personnel | The education specialist, Celia Moran; the M & E and PEI specialist, Mario Rivas; and the finance manager, Gustavo Carcamo were contracted. The finance manager received training on AED procedures. | - Complete hiring of the local team (drivers, security guards, administrative assistants) including the competencies specialist, the economist/NEA team leader, and two more economists. |

LESSONS LEARNED

The Phase I planning process emphasized the importance of investing time in planning with other implementers and the Ministry of Education to ensure MINED ownership and concurrence of the plans. While this planning process takes time, it is a very worthwhile activity.

CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED AND PROPOSED SOLUTIONS

Integration of the Plan with implementers, delay at the beginning of the Program, and change in focus

EQUIP2 had initially hoped to carry out the Integrated Planning Workshop during December since that was a requirement before beginning any project activities. However, the workshop had to be delayed due to the availability of the MINED and the implementers and the holidays in December.

The Integrated Planning process resulted in new activities and responsibilities for EQUIP2. Although the new activities were consistent with the initial objectives of the program, they required changes in workplans, budgets and the composition of the technical team. These changes are being addressed as quickly as possible.

Timelines with the MINED

One of the biggest challenges of the first year of the Project will be meeting the deadlines defined by MINED for the presentation of the programs and the materials, particularly since these activities were not initially planned. EQUIP2 believes validating the materials with teachers and students is very important, however the validation process requires additional time. This issue was discussed with MINED, and it has been agreed that the validation should be done in only a few schools so that the deadlines proposed by MINED can be met. EQUIP2 believes this is the best solution way to ensure high quality of materials in a limited amount of time.

Formation of Local Team

The proposed Competency Specialist decided she could not take residence in El Salvador and did not accept the position. Since EQUIP2 now has the responsibility for the materials development, the profile of the Competencies Specialist and other specialists has changed. The new set of activities for competencies requires expertise in competencies, language, materials development, validation of materials, study programs, continuous assessment, and teaching and learning. Very few specialists with the mentioned characteristics and who are available to move to El Salvador for 18 months can be found. EQUIP2 will present an alternate strategy to form a technical team with these qualifications and has identified a resident specialist with extensive experience in language competencies and materials development.

Establishment of local counterparts

The availability of local counterparts is essential to the success of the project, particularly one in which the objective is to establish technical capacity for research. In this case, the MINED counterpart for the National Education Account Evaluation and Cost Effectiveness Studies was only recently established within MINED as the *Gerencia de Avaluación de Información*. Having a clear counterpart and well-defined level of interest within the project will help enhance coordination and advance project activities at a much faster rate

SUCCESS STORIES

Given that this is the first quarterly report, success stories will not be reported.

MONITORING VISITS AND GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

In this first quarterly report, areas of intervention and established visits will not be reported.

INTERNATIONAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

CURRENT QUARTER

| Area of Technical Assistance | Specialist | Dates |
|---|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| NEA and cost-benefit studies | Don Winkler | December, January and March |
| NEA | Amber Gove | December, January, February and March |
| Information Systems | Pablo Destefanis | March |
| Language Competencies | Rosa Julia Guzmán | February |
| M&E | Ray Chesterfield | February |
| Continuous Evaluation | Abigail Harris | December |
| Planning and Organizational Development | Alan Hurwitz | January |

PROPOSAL FOR NEXT QUARTER

| Area of Technical Assistance | Specialist | Dates |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| NEA and cost-benefit studies | Don Winkler | May |
| NEA | Amber Gove | May |
| Information Systems | Pablo Destefanis | May |
| Language Competencies | Rosa Julia Guzmán Clemencia Cuervo | May |
| Competencies | Antoni Zabala | May |
| Active Learning Methodologies | Marina de Mogollón | TBD |
| M&E | Ray Chesterfield | April, May |
| Continuous Evaluation | Abigail Harris | May |
| PEI Assessment | TBD | April |